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- ART. I. — 1. *Tausend und Ein Tag im Orient.* Von FRIEDRICH BODENSTEDT. In 2 Bände. Berlin. 1850.
2. *Die Lieder des MIRTSA-SCHAFFY.* Von FRIEDRICH BODENSTEDT. Zweite Auflage. Berlin. 1853.

ON the last day of October, 1848, the Revolution was at its height in Vienna. A girdle of bayonets clasped the unhappy city. The flames of sacked houses reddened the evening sky, and ever and anon the explosion of artillery, the roll of drums, and the screams of wounded combatants, filled the air with horrible echoes. At twilight, in the chamber of a young poet who had recently returned from a sojourn of several years in the East, a group of friends sat engaged in broken and sorrowful conversation. Now a blast of the alarm trumpets pealed across the square; now a cannon-ball crashed through the barricades the people had erected in the street. "Bodenstedt!" said Auerbach, "you are less agitated than we; tell us some of your adventures in the Orient; it will transport us into a different world, and help us to forget the horrors of the present time." The whole company echoed the request. "Do consent!" they exclaimed, and drew their chairs closer around him. "Tell us of the Caucasus," said Kaufmann, "and of your famous teacher, Mirtsa-Schaffy: he is my favorite!" "And of the Black Sea," added Karl Beck, "and

of the Cossacks, and of the Turks." "Also of the beautiful Georgian maidens," cried Max Schlesinger, "and of Ararat and Armenia."

The poet pilgrim willingly met the invitation, and recounted many an incident from his travels. He told them of Mirtsa-Schaffy; of his wisdom and delicious songs; of Ararat and Armenia; of the Caucasus, and the lovely Georgian girls; of the Black Sea; and of the Cossacks and the Turks. The company sat far into the night, listening to the unstudied recital, and scarcely thought of the dire tumult which raged without. Two years afterwards the narrator carefully wrote out in full, and gave to the public, what he had briefly sketched to his friends on that memorable night. Such was the interesting origin of the work — "Thousand and One Days in the Orient" — from which the present article is to be drawn. The book is a model of manifold excellence. It is published in a form of admirable taste and beauty. It abounds with picturesque descriptions of the scenery and society of the lands which its author traversed, and with spirited versions of the lyrics of their representative living poets. We propose here only to indicate its general course and character, and to hint, by a few suggestive outlines, the portrait of its central personage.

Late in the September of 1844, a scholarly and adventurous young German, Frederic Bodenstedt by name, is on his way from Moscow, across the Steppes of the Don, to the immemorial world of the Orient. The landscape, thus soon, has assumed a wintry aspect. The sky is all gray, and the noon is gloomy, as if evening twilight already hung in the air. On the naked limbs of the trees perch horrid swarms of crows and ravens. The autumnal wind whistles, shudderingly, over the snow-clad fields, through which the road winds, like a gigantic black stripe. For, as yet, the ice is too thin and the snow too loose to resist the hoofs of the horses and the wheels of the wagons; and through every hole thus made the water oozes up from the slimy ground, as black as a fountain of tar.

Toilsome and monotonous days have passed. Behind our traveller now lie the Steppes, and before him loom the misty giants of the Caucasus. But the heaven is so clouded, the dense fog so baffles his prying gaze, that he might fancy him-

self still upon the plain. Suddenly the cloud-veil parts, the mist falls, and the legendary peaks — on one of whose cliffs Prometheus formerly hung — tower on his sight in stupendous glory. At equal distances, right and left, seventeen thousand feet in height, the summits of Elborz and Kasbek shimmer in a magic play of colors, while, half-way between, a savage group of Titans hold the blue floor of heaven on their frosty polls. Yonder, from the turbid mouth of the river Kouban to the fire-temples of the Parsees on the Caspian shore, runs the ragged and terrible mountain wall which separates Asia from Europe. Directly in front of him, a monstrous mountain rises above the luxuriant vegetation at his feet, above the gloomier verdure which spreads as a broad girdle around its flanks, above the straggling grass and dwarf shrubs which speck the higher rocks, until its enormous shoulders, emerging in naked beauty, receive their winter-robe of such dazzling whiteness that it seems composed of woven diamonds.

Our pilgrim has made the frightful pass, and appears again, just at sunset, dragging his tired feet towards Duschett, the first village that snuggles at the Asiatic base of the Caucasus. Behind him soars the mountain realm in its icy splendor, with its dreadful precipices, its dizzy chasms, and thunder-plunging avalanches. Beneath his eyes stretches a blooming land of soft-swelling fields, veined with a murmuring river. The snow has not melted from his boots when they crush the flowers smiling in his path. A gentle breeze whispers through the foliage of the acacias; grape-vines of prodigious size twine in all directions; and singing-birds warble from the branches of the flowering almonds. He has stepped from the frozen door of winter into a garden redolent with roses and blushing in the sunshine.

In a few days Bodenstedt enters Tiflis, the capital of Georgia. Several of his former Moscow friends, now settled here, celebrate his arrival by a feast served in true Oriental style. Circassian boys, arrayed in picturesque dresses, bring forward the dishes; a slender Armenian distributes gigantic silver-ornamented buffalo-horns, full of blood-red wine; a Persian singer in a blue robe, a high-peaked cap on his head, his beard

close-trimmed, his fingers' ends dyed blue, his face aglow, plays on a lyre and sings the choicest odes of Hafiz. Wherever the Western stranger turns his eyes, he discerns something new and curious. He seems to be living over in reality a tale of the "Thousand and One Nights," whereof as a boy he has so often read and dreamed. When the party separate, and go upon the roofs to their couches, the brilliant and fragrant night is reigning in all its charms. It is one of those enchanted nights known only under the Georgian sky, where the moon illumines the noiseless landscape, as if its radiance were the sunlight, falling, softened, through some mysterious, tender-woven veil.

Bodenstedt desires an instructor to guide and help him in his studies of Tartar, Persian, and Arabic literature. Accident favors his search; for he is introduced to Mirtsa-Schaffy, the Wise Man of Gjändsha, as he names himself from the village where he was born, in the province of Karadagh, on the banks of the ancient Araxes. In Mirtsa-Schaffy we have a thorough and admirable specimen of Oriental character, an excellent representative of his class, the scholars and poets of Persia. The comic side of his character, resulting from no buffoonery or crudeness of nature, but from his perfect ingenuousness, his primeval simplicity and frankness both in action and speech, is most amusing. At the same time he is vain as Absalom, irascible as Ali, wise as Lokman, and affectionate as Hatim. His learning, in its department, is extensive, his literary taste exquisite, his wedded wit and humor inexhaustible, the creative swiftness and scope of his lyric genius quite marvellous. We proceed now to illustrate these statements by examples, confident that a picture, however unskillfully drawn, of a living Persian poet, a not unworthy successor of Hafiz, will have a novel interest for our readers.

It is matter of great astonishment to Mirtsa-Schaffy how the travellers from the Western nations, dwelling as they do there in darkness and unbelief, totally ignorant of the sacred languages, Persian and Arabic, can yet boast of possessing *literati*. However, he willingly forgives this pretension in Bodenstedt, upon the promise of a silver dollar for each lesson in these tongues, the depositories of all true wisdom.

Hereupon the Wise Man of Gjändsha endeavors to make his pupil comprehend his exceeding good fortune in having obtained such a teacher as himself. "I, Mirtsa-Schaffy, am the wisest man of the whole East. You, as my pupil, are second in wisdom. Misunderstand me not: I have a friend, Omar-Effendi, who is a very wise man, and not third among the scholars of the land. If I lived not, and Omar-Effendi were your teacher, he would be the first, and you, as his pupil, the second wise man." After this utterance, Mirtsa-Schaffy, with a shrewd look, lays his forefinger upon his brow, and Bodenstein nods assent.

Several rival teachers strive to supplant the Wise Man of Gjändsha with his pupil. The most prominent of these jealous sages is Mirtsa-Jussuf, the Wise Man of Bagdad. Because he pursued his study of Arabic at the most famous university, he argues, his knowledge must be much more profound than that of Mirtsa-Schaffy, who is indeed but an ass among the bearers of wisdom. "That plebeian cannot write nor sing at all," cries Jussuf to Bodenstein, after obtaining access to his chamber. "Now, I ask you, what is knowledge without writing? What is wisdom without song? What is Mirtsa-Schaffy in comparison with me?" At this moment a measured rapping on the door with a pair of slippers is heard. It announces the arrival of the chosen instructor to commence his lessons. Leaving his shoes at the door, as is the custom, Mirtsa-Schaffy enters the room in clean gay-colored stockings. He reads the whole story at a glance, surveys the suddenly embarrassed and cringing Jussuf from head to foot with superb disdain, and would express his contempt, but Bodenstein exclaims: "Wise Man of Gjändsha! what have my ears heard? Will you instruct me when you cannot write nor sing? Mirtsa-Jussuf says you are but an ass among the bearers of wisdom." The displeasure in Mirtsa-Schaffy's face gradually takes on an expression of perfect scorn. He clutches one of his thick-soled slippers from the threshold, and with it beats the poor Jussuf so unmercifully, that he begs with the most affecting gestures and words to be spared. But Mirtsa-Schaffy is pitiless. "What! you are wiser than I am? I cannot sing, do you say? I will make

music for you ! I cannot write, hey ? I will write it on your head !” The action suits the word. Whimpering and moaning, the Bagdad sage staggers under the blows through the antechamber and down the steps. The victor returns, calmly warns the astounded young German not to lend any ear to such pretenders as Jussuf and his companions, and then proceeds to expound a mystic ode of Hafiz commencing,

“ O dervish ! pure is wine,
And sin it is to hate it;
Is any wisdom mine ?
From drinking wine I date it.”

The pupil and teacher soon grow intimate, and very fond of each other. They often sit together in the evening, smoking their long Persian pipes, and sipping wine. The Wise Man of Gjändsha plays on a stringed instrument, and accompanies it with his own voice, improvising with remarkable fluency the most beautiful poems.

“ As the nightingale oft from a rose’s dew sips,
So I wet with pure wine my languishing lips.

“ As the soul of perfume through a flower’s petals slips,
So pure wine passes through the rose-door of my lips.

“ As to port from afar float the full-loaded ships,
So this wine-beaker drifts to the strand of my lips.

“ As the white-driven sea o’er a cliff’s edges drips,
So the red-tinted wine breaks in foam on my lips.”

One day Bodenstedt asks the ground of such gorgeous eulogies of wine by the poets of Persia, from Firdousi to Mirtsa-Schaffy. The Wise Man of Gjändsha snatches his lyre, and instantly sings :—

“ The best ground is the ground of wet gold
In the depth of a beaker :
The best mouth is the mouth, from of old,
Of the wine-praising speaker !”

Calling at his teacher’s house unexpectedly, Bodenstedt apologizes for the intrusion. In a second Mirtsa-Schaffy sings in response :—

“Come in the evening, and come in the morning;
Come when I ask you, and come without warning.
Mirtsa-Schaffy, with you when a-meeting,
Always rejoices, and his heart gives you greeting.”

At another time they are walking together through a garden which has just put on the painted garb of spring. The flowers are breaking through the grass; clusters of little grapes peep from the vines; white blossoms shower down from the locust-trees, like snow-flakes; and the rose-bushes are beginning to bud. The pupil inquires, “How are you able so quickly to weave thought, image, and rhyme into forms of such grace?” The poet stretches out his hand, gathers a nosegay, and, reaching it to the young man, replies: “Behold, this nosegay was plucked in a moment; but the flowers composing it did not grow in a moment. So is it with my songs.”

Upon a certain occasion the Wise Man of Gjändsha sits on his silk ottoman, his legs crossed, and wreaths of fragrant smoke curling lazily around him. He lays down his chibouk, and lifts a glass of wine, like sparkling molten gold. Bodenstedt says: “The hearts of the maidens beat high through the ravishing power of your sweet songs, O Mirtsa-Schaffy; but the wise men of the West will say that you are deficient in variety of subjects. Have you not written songs on other things than wine, and love, and roses?” Mirtsa is silent for a moment, then quaffs the whole bumper which he held in his hand, and, rising upon his feet, sings the following improvisation in answer:—

“Doth it displease you that I sing
Of few things only as divine?
Of naught but roses, love, and spring,
And nightingales, and wooing wine?”

“Which were the best, that I should praise
Will-o'-the-wisps and wax flambeaux,
Or to the sun's eternal rays
Fresh panegyrics still compose?”

“While like a sun that shines abroad
I pour my raying songs around,

The beautiful I do applaud,
And not what 's on the common found.

“Let other bards their lyres attone
To wars, and mosques, and fame of kings ;
To roses, love, and wine alone
My fingers strike the melting strings.

“O pure Schaffy ! how fragrant are
Thy verses on these lovely themes !
Thy songs are strains without a jar,
While others' best are painful screams !”

One beautiful afternoon, the Wise Man of Gjändsha and his pupil are sitting in friendly converse. The romantic twilight draws on. One glass of wine has followed another, with the usual Oriental toast, “May it have a pleasant journey !” One song, too, has succeeded another. All at once, Mirtsa-Schaffy grows sad and thoughtful. After remaining silent a good while, he opens his mouth, and in a melancholy tone sings these words :—

“My heart with the anguish of lovers is riven ;
O ask me not for whom !
To me has the poison of parting been given ;
O wretched is my doom !”

The sympathizing Bodenstedt interrupts him by asking, “Are you in love, Mirtsa ?” Shaking his head sorrowfully, he answers, “No, I am not in love ; but I was in love once, as no man ever was before.” Eagerly the young European strives to draw the story forth. He succeeds, and sits till the stars fade, hanging with ever-increasing interest on his worthy teacher's lips.

We go back eleven years, to the time when Mirtsa-Schaffy first saw Zuleika, the daughter of Ibrahim, the Chan of Gjändsha. How can her beauty be portrayed ? What shall be said of her eyes blacker than night, brighter than stars ? What shall be said of the grace of her form, — the loveliness of her hands and feet, — her soft hair wound about her, long as eternity, — her mouth, whose breath is sweeter than the breath of the roses of Shiraz ? Vain is every attempt to describe

that which transcends human comprehension. For more than six months, young Mirtsa has daily seen the Chan's daughter when she sits on the roof at noon, with her fair companions, or in the evening when she orders her female slaves to dance before her in the moonlight. He has never spoken to her, and does not know whether she has recognized his glances. He dares not go near her, but afar off basks in the beams of her countenance. Shall man venture to approach the sun? During the day he is obliged to be very cautious; for if the haughty Chan suspected he had cast loving looks upon Zuleika, his life from that moment would be worth less than a flawed pearl. But in the evening, when old Ibrahim has retired, the enamored youth steals around the house, and waits for glimpses of the houris on its roof, which seems heaven as he looks up to it.

Soon the flames of his tumultuous heart break out in songs. Sometimes he sings Ghazels from Hafiz, sometimes from Firdousi; but oftenest he sings his own. Why should Mirtsa-Schaffy shine in borrowed gems? Whose voice is tenderer than his voice? Whose songs are more charming than his songs? He stands beneath her balcony. His eyes are two glow-worms under the dark vines, as he sings:—

“What is the blooming rose's cup, where nightingales may sip,
Compared with thy more blooming mouth, and thy much sweeter lip?
What is the sun, and what the moon, and what each glowing star?
They burn and tremble but for thee, still eying thee from far.
And what am I, my heart, the love-mad songs that I create?
We are the blessed slaves thy beauty doomed to celebrate.”

No token of recognition is vouchsafed to him, and he goes sadly home. But the next night, when it is quite dark, as he stands under the concealing foliage of an orange-tree, a damsel in a white veil approaches him, and, as she passes, whispers, “Mirtsa-Schaffy, follow where I go.” His heart beats loudly, and he follows the white figure gliding before him. They soon reach a secure place, and the mysterious conductress says: “I am Fatima, the confidant of Zuleika. My mistress looks on you with favor. Your songs have disturbed her heart. Without her knowledge I have come, that you

may draw courage from the well of my words; because I am pleased with you, and it grieves me to see you suffering so much." Mirtsa reels with ecstasy, and cries: "Can it be that Zuleika has heard the weeping of the poorest of her slaves? The God of thousands is only one God! Great is his goodness, and wonderful are his ways! What have I done that he should pour the stream of his mercy over me through the hand of Zuleika; that he should guide the rivulet of my songs to the ocean of her beauty!" Fatima replies: "You do well to praise Allah, and the kind condescension of my mistress. Had not her innocence and modesty surpassed even her beauty, she would long ago have granted you a token of her favor. Besides, she fears her father, who loves her tenderly, but would never forgive her if she should bestow her heart upon a poor Mirtsa. The rich Achmed-Chan, who has now gone to Moscow with Ibrahim, is dying for her hand, and when they come back her father will give her to him. Therefore, before that return, we must bring your suit to the desired goal. To-morrow evening, when the Muezzin calls from the minaret to prayers, be in the garden, and I will direct Zuleika's attention to you. Then sing from your heart, and in the flower-language of lovers she will throw you an answer."

Mirtsa-Schaffy, on the spot at the appointed time, soon sees Fatima and Zuleika looking down towards him. With his sweetest tones he commences:—

"In the mosque of true love,
See me kneel at the shrine:
Hear my heart call above
For an answer from thine!
With delight, or with scorn,
Dost thou hark while I sing?
Throw a rose or a thorn:
Life or death it will bring."

Not a thorn, but a full-blown rose, drops at his feet. He snatches it to his lips, falls on his knee, and the world swims beneath him. Never in his life did the sun appear to him so beautiful, as the late-rising moon appears this night. Who

shall describe the full-gushing sweetness of the days that follow? Ah! the joy-time of poor Mirtsa's life now stands in the zenith. His love quickly becomes known throughout Gjändsha, and all his acquaintances join to further his suit; some from love for him, others from hatred of Ibrahim-Chan.

Two weeks have fled. A threatening cloud suddenly darkens the sky of these basking lovers. The two Chans, Ibrahim and Achmed, — the stern father, and the destined husband of Zuleika, — are returning, and will soon arrive. The tidings fill Mirtsa with terror and energy. Out of the abyss of this alarm, he will, on the eagle-wings of resolve, bear hope to the mountain. This prize lost, the world has nothing left for Mirtsa-Schaffy. He will risk all on the hazard of a single die. He determines, by the help of Fatima, to elope with Zuleika this very night. Fatima readily agrees to the plan, and promises to guide him secretly at midnight into the chamber of his beloved, who, forewarned, will be in readiness to flee with him. A mysterious fear sets all his limbs in trepidation as he prepares to start on the momentous enterprise. "Mirtsa-Schaffy!" he says to himself, "how can you be so audacious? How dare you tread with sinful feet the sharp bridge, El-Sirat, which shall lead you into Paradise? But what is all the wisdom or danger on earth in comparison with the loveliness of Zuleika?" At this moment he reaches the gate, and hears from the low voice of Fatima, "Hasten, Mirtsa; my mistress, in bridal array, already awaits you." He silently follows her trembling steps, and, unobserved, gains the shell of the pearl of beauty, the chamber of Zuleika. There she sits, richly robed, and her young limbs shine through the dazzling veil, like Peris gleaming through the white mists of Peri-land. At the sight of this celestial creature, Mirtsa-Schaffy's tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, and he bends in worship. "This is no time for astonishment," breaks in the sensible Fatima. "Take her by the hand, and beg her to go with you whither Allah leads." He obeys. Zuleika gives a faint shriek, and starts back; but after much persuasion her timidity is overcome, her love rises paramount, they glide from the house in safety, they mount two dromedaries, and ride swiftly out of Gjändsha towards the tents of Tartary.

For three days they journey unmolested. Unhappily, a fierce storm compels them to seek the shelter of a hut in a way-side village. In two hours the intended son-in-law of Ibrahim, with a troop of armed followers, rides through the bursts of rain and lightning, and breaks in upon the fugitives. Hard, alas! is poverty; but to find a cavern-full of diamonds, and then lose the treasure, — how much harder is this! What avails it to go through Paradise, if it be but the passage-way to hell! Zuleika stands, like a pale goddess of grief, compressing her mighty agony in her heart. But poor Mirtsa-Schaffy, the Wise Man of Gjändsha, the singer of wine, love, and roses, in addition to the incurable anguish of his heart, is forced, at the command of the cruel Achmed-Chan, to submit to the most disgraceful treatment. On those very feet which so recently bore him, over the peak and summit of bliss, into the chamber of Zuleika, he receives — the bastinado!

At the end of this recital Mirtsa-Schaffy sighs profoundly, and appears much depressed by the recollections it has stirred anew. Bodenstedt contemplates him with a feeling in which poetic respect and friendship mingle with a sense of burlesque. A whole half-hour he sits, silent and mournful, inhaling the smoke of his chibouk in full draughts, each a minute in duration, and then breathing it out again in long, slow wreaths, so that his whole head is enveloped in clouds, through which the peak of his lofty pyramidal cap pierces like the steeple of a church. Never, since that most luckless hour, has he laid eyes on his lost Zuleika. The blissful visions and exuberant hopes of youth and first love are buried in the silent darkness of eleven years ago. Then the sun of his life sank, and thenceforward there remains to him only the pen-sive moonlight of memory. These thoughts shed an oppressive melancholy over him; for they tell him that he will never be so happy again. He takes his lute, and brings tears to Bodenstedt's eyes by his pathetic singing of these lines: —

“ When, as my life's appointed courses wend,
The blessed day of youth is ended quite,
'T is true, remembrances like stars ascend;
But then they only show that it is night!”

One hour of confidential communion brings men closer than

whole years of ordinary intercourse ; and after the above narration the Wise Man of Gjändsha has no secret from his pupil. Before him his heart lies as open as the gardens of Tiflis. In the long winter-evenings, when the tempest raves without, and the wind howls down from the mountains as drearily as if in one piercing lamentation it would express the condensed pain and sorrow of all humanity, Mirtsa-Schaffy often seems low-spirited, and indulges in regretful reveries over departed hours. At such times, Bodenstedt turns the conversation upon Zuleika. Her name acquires a high significance for him. She becomes the embodied idea of feminine beauty, the maidenly concentration of all earthly modesty and pride, the impersonation of every virtue and charm of woman. The poems dedicated to her are the roses in the song-garlands of Mirtsa-Schaffy.

His former relation to Zuleika determines all his future conduct and relation to the rest of her sex. All the women are in love with him ; for since *she* loved him, how can any other woman hate him ? But he can never love again. And he resolves that his coldness shall make all other women pay penance for the anguish he has suffered through the loss of one. He is really a very fine-looking and attractive person, as the portrait of him, in the frontispiece of the "Thousand and One Days," shows. His manners are calm and elegant ; his head always freshly shaven and white as snow ; his beard curling and odorous as the beard of Solomon, to whom he often refers ; his finger-tips and nails stained as blue as the Georgian heaven. His tall conical cap he thinks is a sure snare to catch susceptible hearts. Whenever he sees any feminine form on the terraces or the balconies, he seizes the opportunity to show some portion of his white head, by cocking his lofty Phrygian cap jauntily on one side. Casting a complacent glance, he passes by with a stately mien, confident of having made a new conquest. He never takes advantage of his conquests. Each is a fresh sacrifice on the altar inscribed ZULEIKA. What cares he how the maidens are consumed by the fire of his eyes and songs, in comparison with which all the glances and tones sprinkled from the eyes and lips of other singers are but extinguished sparks ?

Let the Occidental reader by no means so far forget the peculiar traits of Oriental character as to think the Wise Man of Gjändsha a fool. That would be a blunder indeed. There is often a magnificent morality in his strains, and they are usually brimmed with bright thoughts and poured forth in grace.

“The fulness of truth to express is most dangerous now ;
 Yet, Mirtsa-Schaffy ! ever noble and truthful be thou :
 Be not a false light, on the marshes of lyingness left.”

In one of his poems to Zuleika, he daringly exclaims :—

“I, in my glowing songs, from out the skies
 Snatch sun and moon and stars,
 And lay them as a burning sacrifice
 On Beauty’s altar-bars.”

He is an independent Persian, a sort of Mohammedan come-outer ; and with what delicate skill of invective, in one of his dialectic battles with the dervishes, does he state both the orthodox odium which attaches to the utterance of radical truth, and the meanness of falsifying one’s honest convictions to evade that odium !

“Who loveth the truth, the bridle must hold in his hand.
 Who thinketh the truth, with foot in the stirrup must stand.
 Who speaketh the truth, for arms must with wings be equipped.
 Who telleth a lie, says Mirtsa-Schaffy, shall be whipped.”

On another occasion, with that extemporaneous readiness which so remarkably distinguishes him, he says to a rich but unpopular bard, whose rhetoric is fine, but whose thoughts are poor, and who consequently is accustomed to steal the ideas of others and exhibit them in handsomer robes than they wore before :—

“Better stars without shine,
 Than the shine without stars.
 Better wine without jars,
 Than the jars without wine.
 Better honey without bees,
 Than the bees without honey.
 Better please without money,
 Than have money but not please.”

The Wise Man of Bagdad, Mirtsa-Jussuf, whose inferiority to the Wise Man of Gjändsha was some time since proved in that *striking* manner which our reader cannot have forgotten, has not yet abandoned the hope of securing Bodenstedt as his pupil. He has recourse to various artifices to compass this end, little suspecting what indissoluble ties now connect the young German and his teacher. Jussuf is not wanting in learning nor in reason. His defect is in character, spirit, and reliability. He is a pedant; one of those bores, who, if put out at the front door, will go round and enter by the back gate. This envious sage allows hardly a week to pass without furnishing Bodenstedt some evidence of his resources and accomplishments as an instructor. One day the young pilgrim from the evening-land receives a poem praising himself as a paragon of wisdom; at another time, a picture portraying him as Rustam, the great Persian hero, riding on an elephant. This picture was executed by Mirtsa-Jussuf on thick paper, with his finger-nail alone, and, considering the means, is finished with incredible skill. Bodenstedt at last acknowledges these attentions, by sending him in return a beautiful little mirror. Upon this, Jussuf's elation knows no bounds. He tells his neighbors that the Wise Man of Gjändsha is about to lose his favorite pupil. He even ventures to ridicule Mirtsa-Schaffy in doggerel verses. But to cap the climax of his assurance, he sends a small package of his finger-nail engravings to Bodenstedt, with the message that he will, in addition to all the lessons he is receiving from his present instructor, teach him how to make pictures like these, and will charge him no more for tuition than he now pays to Mirtsa-Schaffy. To the unbounded surprise and chagrin of the great scholar of Bagdad, the offer is courteously declined.

Bodenstedt has a high opinion of the merit of some of the poems sent to him by Jussuf. He shows them to Mirtsa-Schaffy, who smiles, and traces nearly all their beauties to the original sources from which they have been unconscionably appropriated. He concludes his analysis of these pieces by taking his lute, and giving vent alike to his satirical merri-ment and his self-complacent genius in the following lines:—

“ Mirtsa-Jussuf is a much-learnéd man.
Now reads he Hafiz, and now the Koran,
Dschamy, Chakány, then Saad's Gülistan :
Here steals an image, and there steals a flower,
Now plucks a jewel, and now robs a bower.
What has been often said says he again,
Sets the whole world in his plagiarized strain ;
Tricks out his booty in scrambled-up plumes,
Spreads himself, and the name Poet assumes.
Otherwise lives and sings Mirtsa-Schaffy :
Not a purloiner from others is he.
Glow's his own heart as a guide-star in gloom,
Scattering far a celestial perfume,
And with no stolen productions bedressed,
Blooms a whole garden of flowers in his breast.”

Mirtsa-Schaffy, ignorant of his rival's recent machinations to alienate Bodenstedt from him, and of his confident expectation of success, has marked with no little surprise how haughtily he carries his head in the bazaar and the streets, and what contemptuous looks he casts on him, as if he had wholly forgotten the slipper scene. He is still more astonished at being lampooned in execrable doggerel. But trifles do not disturb such a man as he, and he bears all the Jussufian impudence and affected scorn with the becoming repose of conscious superiority. Sometimes he amuses himself by singing to Bodenstedt a retort upon the baffled Bagdad sage.

“ Wretched Mirtsa-Jussuf ! all your sneers I despise :
While you sulk, with gay heart through the world I am tripping ;
And, instead of returning your hatred and lies,
Only see, how this beaker of wine I am sipping.

“ Retribution enough is inflicted on you,
In that nothing on earth your fastidiousness pleases ;
While for me springs delight from the stars and the dew,
From the birds and the hills, from the flowers and the breezes.

“ Sprawling Mirtsa-Jussuf with great awkwardness walks :
How he wrinkles his brow, as with thought it were laden !
And with all who pass by he finds fault as he stalks,
Because not as he goes, goes each man and each maiden.

“So the ox, as he plods with unwieldiest gait,
And his voice is a hoarse and most horrible bellow,
Thinks he must for this cause the sweet nightingale hate, —
That so lightly she flies and her song is so mellow.”

Mirtsa-Jussuf, forced in these encounters to make bitterness supply his want of fresh wit, always comes off worsted. His bitterness becomes flaming but impotent rage, when one day Mirtsa-Schaffy sends to his house a merciless satire, which effectually ends this memorable conflict.

There is an inn at Tiflis kept by a German named Salzmann, extensively patronized by foreigners. This inn is especially famous for two things: first, for the delicious omelets served on its board; secondly, for a rare blood-red wine, which Mirtsa-Schaffy has baptized by the name of “Evening-red,” because, he says, when he looks on it, he feels as if he saw the sinking sun. At this inn, in a blue chamber, around a table covered with a blue cloth, Bodenstedt sometimes spends a convivial hour with his friends. Occasionally on these evenings the copious bumpers of “Evening-red” follow each other so fast, that, when the guests part and go out in the clear night, the whole sky seems a blue table-cloth, the moon a lucid omelet, and the stars sparkling glasses. One of these jovial reunions has just ended, and Bodenstedt is on his way home. Not a cloudlet specks the azure heaven. A warmth lies in the air, as though the brilliant Georgian moon radiated heat as the sun does. The streets are nearly deserted; the bazaars and workshops are all shut. Now and then a drunken soldier staggers past, or a Georgian woman, hidden in a spotless white veil, swims by. Here and there the roofs are alive with airy shapes of lovely women, clad in their artistic drapery, and floating in the moonlight. Whenever Bodenstedt lingers to look on them, they vanish like visions of Paradise from the gaze of a sinner. But suddenly he pauses, with straining ear, his feet fastened to the spot. He hears a serenade, and he fancies that the tones are familiar to him. He recognizes the voice, — he recognizes the song, — he recognizes thee, O Mirtsa-Schaffy! He sees the yellow slippers, the red robes, the blue vest, and transparent veil of a beautiful creature, who stands shyly on the roof of a gray house, and

listens to the plaintive strains. O Wise Man of Gjändsha ! thou thinkest thyself unseen in the shadow of the wall, in this lonesome street. But never will thy pupil forget thine image, as thou holdest thy hands, now pressed upon thy heart, now in the form of a half-moon above thine ear, as if thou wert in worship before some angelic being. As Bodenstedt proceeds homeward, he involuntarily hums the song of Goethe which begins with the words,

“ Once there was a king.”

When Mirtsa holds his next session with his pupil, he appears inspired, and like a new being. The settled melancholy habitual to his countenance has fled, and given place to a cheerful and glowing expression. At the close of the lesson, the happy poet of Gjändsha drains a flask of wine, and accompanies his lute-strings with this song : —

“ Now is the blossoming time of the roses :
Maiden, bring wine ; never wait for the morrow.
Over us joyfully smiles the soft blueness :
Quick let us round the dark field of old sorrow,
Tread the bright path of to-day in its newness,
Plucking at once the fresh garlands of roses.”

“ Mirtsa-Schaffy ! ” exclaims Bodenstedt, “ you are in love, from head to foot ; I see it plainly.” “ You are right,” he replies, smiling ; “ the world shines again. My Hafisa is the column of gentleness, the chief jewel in the crown of bliss, the reflection of Allah on earth. Listen, you shall hear one of my songs in her praise : —

“ When on a day the gates of Paradise
Stand open for the good as their reward,
Great hosts, both men of virtue and of vice,
Will look in terror to the Lord.

“ But I, whatever be the others’ fates,
Shall stand by doubt and fear quite unconcerned ;
Since long before to me, on earth, the gates
Of Paradise, through thee, were open turned.”

The father of Hafisa objects to Mirtsa as a son-in-law, be-

cause his income as a private tutor is small and precarious. Surely the course of true love never did run smooth in the East, any more than in the West. Bodenstedt takes the deepest interest in the affair, and endeavors to secure an official appointment for his teacher by the help of his friends among the Russian officers at Tiflis, so as to remove the paternal repugnance to Hafisa's marriage. Just at this crisis he is obliged to depart for Germany. He goes by way of Constantinople, and while there is gladdened by the receipt of a letter from the Wise Man of Gjändsha, written in a state of extreme happiness and gratitude. He has obtained an appointment as Professor of Tartar, in the High Military School of Tiflis, and is expecting soon to receive his bride.

The esteem in which Mirtsa held his pupil is expressed, in true Oriental style, in the following little poem, which he once improvised and sang in honor of him : —

“As towards one lofty goal we drive,
In one entanglement we strive :
Both I and thou.

“My heart holds thee, and me holds thine ;
Though sundered, yet conjoined we twine :
Both I and thou.

“My wit caught thee, thine eye caught me ;
And as two fish we swim one sea :
Both I and thou.

“Yet not like fish, but through the air
We sailing soar, an eagle pair :
Both I and thou.”

When they parted, with little expectation on either side of ever meeting again, Mirtsa-Schaffy gave Bodenstedt a volume of his poems, called “The Book of Wisdom and the Source of Knowledge,” written out with his own hand, in that exquisite style for which Persian manuscripts are so celebrated. The larger portion of these poems Bodenstedt translated and published in Germany, and they were widely read and admired. Having sent a few early copies of his “Thousand and One Days in the Orient” to Tiflis, he received from an

old acquaintance there a letter, bearing date July, 1850, which contained this interesting passage :—

“How would the good Mirtsa-Schaffy have rejoiced ere now could he have seen himself as he is engraved in the frontispiece of your volume, and could he have read with his own eyes how many of his fragrant songs have been clothed in the garb of Western speech ! But it will be some time yet before the book reaches his hands. Perhaps you do not know that your learned teacher no longer resides in Tiflis. Having given great satisfaction as Professor in the Military School here, he was appointed, with a larger salary, to the head of a newly established Mohammedan School at Gjändsha. He returned with triumphant joy to the village of his birth and of his first love, that being the highest goal of his wishes. He leads a most happy life with his beautiful Hafisa ; and, when I last heard from him, was already blessed with two children, — a boy and a little maid.”

Mirtsa-Schaffy placed a high estimate both upon the literary abilities and the loyal affection of his pupil, and believed that through him his own fame was destined to spread through the lands of the West, and his strains to be sung by the youths and maidens there. One of his happiest poems — and it is a production of the raciest spirit and beauty, which we should despair of ever translating — prophesies that his lyrics will do for Tiflis, its river, and its gardens, what those of Hafiz have done for Shiraz, the stream of Rocknabad, and the grove of Mosella. We poorly render one stanza thus :—

“Through all lands shall thy verses, O Mirtsa-Schaffy !
Be borne forth, and the tones of thy voice be heard sounding :
The brave thoughts and live words of thine utterance free
Shall go over the world, in sweet echoes rebounding.”

O Wise Man of Gjändsha ! thy Bodenstedt has well done his duty, and thy prophecy is fulfilled even beyond thy vision, and so much sooner ! For not only hast thou won friends all the way from the Cyrus to the Rhine, and had thy genius praised in every literary court of Europe, but even here, thousands of miles farther away, in vast young America, — a land of which thou hast probably never heard, — thy name and thy thoughts shall now be spoken from the Penobscot to the Savannah, from Bunker Hill to San Francisco. O friendly

teacher of Bodenstedt! sweet singer of Tiflis! childlike sage of the Morning-land! art thou still living in thy native village under the shadow of the Tartar mountains? We fancy that we see thee. Through the curling smoke-wreaths from thy chibouk emerges the cone of thy Phrygian cap. Thy face, dimly beheld at intervals between the fragrant clouds, seems the face of one of the genii of contemplation. Thou layest aside the long pipe, and quaffest a cup of "Evening-red." Thou patest the brown cheek of the little Mirtsa-Schaffy, and liftest the young Hafisa upon thy shoulder. Farewell, thou king on the throne of wisdom, thou ruler in the empire of beauty, and may no impudent Jussuf ever vex thee more!

- ART. II. — 1. *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung*. Von G. G. GERVINUS. Vierte gänzlich umgearbeitete Ausgabe. 5 Bände. Leipzig. 1853.
2. *Die deutsche Literatur*. Von WOLFGANG MENZEL. Zweite vermehrte Auflage. 4 Theile. Stuttgart. 1836.
3. *Geschichte der deutschen National-Literatur*. Von A. F. C. VILNAAR. 2 Bände. Fünfte vermehrte Auflage. Marburg. 1852.

No historian has fully described the reciprocal influence which the nations of Europe have exerted in the development of literature during the last two centuries. There has been no lack of biographical dictionaries, encyclopædias, and universal compendiums. Histories of the literature of several countries have been written with learning and taste. The progress of various sciences in all civilized lands has been traced with care. But, in general, the nations have been regarded too much as isolated individuals. The intellectual growth and productiveness of each have not been considered in their relations to the growth and productiveness of the others. The nationalities have been painted as individual existences, rather than as parts of one common body, or members of one great European family. We wish to see